

## Don't let your foster child be left behind: The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

By Mitch Kremer,  
DCFS Education Advisor

Since its passage in 2001, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has created opportunities for some children in low-performing public schools. But services and funding differ, making it confusing to know exactly what NCLB can provide for your child.

The NCLB is supposed to provide a Public School Choice (School Choice) option for students attending public schools that have not met NCLB standards for two consecutive years. These children are conditionally eligible to transfer to a higher-performing school based on availability. The NCLB is also supposed to provide a Supplemental Educational Services (SES) option for students in public schools that have not met NCLB standards for three consecutive years.

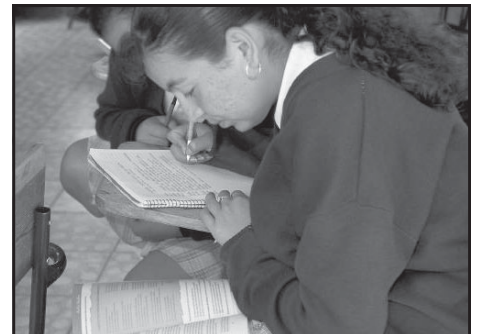
Parents can contact schools directly to determine if their child's school has been identified for school improvement and is required to provide School Choice or SES. Also, before the start of the 2006-2007 school year, schools that must offer either

School Choice or SES are required to mail letters to parents who have children attending those schools.

### Public School Choice Process

With Public School Choice, a parent may choose to transfer the student to a higher performing school within the same district, if available, when the child's current school has not met NCLB standards for two years in a row.

- Prior to the beginning of each school year, districts must notify the parents of students in choice schools that they have the option of sending their children to a school in the same district that is not identified for school improvement, including public charter schools.
- Parents have 30 days from the date of notice to decide whether to exercise the choice option.
- Students who transfer to a school not in school improvement will be enrolled in the same manner as all other children at that public school.
- Districts must provide or pay for transportation to a school not in school improvement.



- If there are space or funding limitations, districts must give priority to the lowest achieving children from low-income families.
- If none of the schools in your district have met NCLB standards, there may be inter-governmental agreements with neighboring districts.

### Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

SES are defined in the NCLB as tutoring and other high-quality academic enrichment services, provided in addition to instruction during the school day, to increase the achievement of eligible children. A parent whose child is in a low performing school can choose either School Choice or SES, but not both. If School Choice is not available in the district, SES must be offered based on available funding.

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## Left behind, con't.

- Prior to the beginning of the school year, school districts must annually notify parents, identify area providers, and provide a description of the services offered by each provider.
- Parents then have 30 days from the date of notice to decide whether to exercise the SES option.
- Schools must help parents select an SES provider, if help is requested.
- Schools in school improvement status must arrange for eligible students to receive SES from providers with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.
- If there is a space or funding limitation, districts must give priority to the lowest achieving children from low-income families.
- School districts are not required to pay for or provide transportation to supplemental educational services.

Foster parents working with a private agency may contact their agency's Education Liaison for assistance. DCFS foster or adoptive parents may contact one of Central Region's DCFS Education Advisors: Vernessa Gipson for Peoria or Champaign sub-region at 217-355-5990; Ann Wells for Peoria sub-region at 217-557-3949; or Mary Chepulis for Springfield sub-region at 217-557-0075.

## LAN Corner: Supporting student stability

*Child and Adolescent Local Area Networks (LANs) are a group of agencies, organizations, community members and individuals within a set geographic area. Their purpose is to bring all of the necessary and interested parties to the table to respond to the needs of citizens within the community, including foster and adoptive parents. This newsletter feature will regularly focus on one of the 15 LANs in Central Region.*

The LAN 14 geographic area has been described as roughly "the size of Delaware." The seven counties that make up LAN 14 are Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Moultrie, and Shelby.

LAN 14 offers a Family Centered Services education initiative through Kids Hope United, called Supporting Student Stability (SSS). This program is designed to support families and youth in promoting positive academic engagement, attendance and behavior. It focuses on better communication between youth and families, and between families and school personnel. SSS Advocates develop strategies to promote positive educational outcomes by reducing trancies, suspensions, and/or expulsions.

### Specific Services Offered:

- Child and Family Team meetings in the school
- One-on-one sessions with the student, which focus on anger management and other coping skills

- Homework assistance
- Parent education and support to reduce household stress
- Wraparound services through DCFS or Illinois State Board of Education Flex Funds
- Referrals to other agencies

The program is open only to students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the following school districts: Charleston #1, Mattoon #2, Casey Westfield #4C, and Paris #95 and #4.

One SSS advocate recalls a sixth grade male student having severe attendance and behavior problems at school. When his case was first opened, the teacher reported that he had to literally hold this child back from attacking someone on a daily basis. With consistent intervention by the SSS Advocate, the student developed higher self-esteem. He also received tutoring for reading through an intern with Kids Hope United. He is now attending school every day and his behavior has significantly improved. This child wrote an essay for Veterans Day and won the essay contest.

For further information about this LAN 14 program and other LAN 14 opportunities, please call Rachel Gubbins at 217-345-6554. LAN 14 meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:30 a.m. in Charleston at the Coles County Center for Human Services, 825 18<sup>th</sup> St. All foster parents are encouraged to participate.

## Foster Parents appreciated across region

DCFS offices throughout the Central Region celebrated Foster Parent Appreciation Month. These events were organized by DCFS staff to honor foster families for their tireless work.

### Bloomington

On June 10, the Bloomington Field Office hosted a picnic at Miller Park. Staff, foster parents and children enjoyed the picnic and outing at Miller Park Zoo.

### Danville

Danville and Watseka DCFS staff welcomed the opportunity to express genuine thanks to foster parents with an ice cream social on May 13. This event featured spokesperson Judy Frazier from Channel 3. Activities included a variety of music, face painting, balloon art, and games for children.

### Galesburg

The Galesburg and Cambridge Field Offices hosted an ice cream social at Lincoln Park on May 18th. Foster families and staff enjoyed the fellowship and celebration of appreciation.

### Pekin

Staff from the Pekin office hosted a training/team building event for foster families on May 10 at the field office. Staff members served parents refreshments. Joni Gilbertson presented a workshop on Self Care and Stress. Staff also provided childcare during the training.

### Quincy

The Quincy Office held its Foster Parent Appreciation Barbeque on May 25 at a park in Quincy. The event was attended by staff, foster parents, and children of DCFS and Illinois Mentor of Quincy, including families from Hancock, Adams and Pike counties. Everyone brought a dish to share and door prizes were given that had been donated by various area businesses.

### Peoria

On May 19, Lifeline agency hosted all foster parents in the Peoria area for an evening of fellowship and dining. The king and queen of 2005, Michelle and Steve Souba, a foster family with DCFS, handed over their crowns to Wes and Michelle Pollard.



### Rock Island

On May 24, the Rock Island Field Office honored the foster parents from Rock Island and Mercer Counties with a reception in the Executive Dining Room. Each foster home was given a gift in appreciation for their service to foster children. Foster parents and DCFS staff enjoyed the time with each other.

## New Central Region support group

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois has started a new support group for adoptive families in the Champaign area.

When: Third Thursday of each month

Time: 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Place: Lutheran Social Services  
103 S. Country Fair Dr.  
Champaign, IL 61821

Contact: Judie Watson  
217-398-3011

Snacks are provided. Childcare is available, but reservations need to be made at least three days in advance. Parents who have questions or are in need of childcare may contact Judie Watson at 217-398-3011.

The Adoptive Parent Support Group is open to all parents who have adopted or are in the process of adopting. This includes private, international and DCFS adoptions. The support group is an ongoing opportunity for pre- and post-adoptive families to create connections with each other and share their joys, concerns and questions. Families will also receive information about adoption, through presentations and group discussions.

# Central Region Training Calendar

## FosterPRIDE In-Service Modules

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend PRIDE In-Service Training. Licensing and child welfare staff are invited to attend the training if they inform the college of their attendance a week prior to the training.

### Peoria Area 888-507-7433

#### **Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs**

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**PEORIA** *Lutheran Social Svcs.*  
Sept. 21 & 28, Oct. 5 (Thu) 6-9 p.m.

#### **Module 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Childhood Sexual Abuse**

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**GALESBURG** *Carl Sandburg Coll.*  
Aug. 14, 21 & 28 (Mon) 6-9 p.m.

### Champaign Area 217-355-4644

#### **Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs**

(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**NORMAL** *BabyFold*  
Aug. 15, 22 & 29 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**CHAMPAIGN** *Restoration Urban Ministries*  
July 17 & 24, Aug. 7 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

## Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six-hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

### Peoria Area • 888-507-7433

**EAST MOLINE** *Black Hawk College*  
Aug. 12 & 19 (Sat) 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

**PEORIA** *Lutheran Social Svcs.*  
Sept. 18 & 25 (Mon) 6-9 p.m.

### Champaign Area • 217-355-4644

**CHAMPAIGN** *Restoration Urban Ministries*  
Sept. 12 & 19 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**DECATUR** *Webster Cantrell Hall*  
Sept. 18 & Oct. 5 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

### Springfield Area • 217-786-2458

**SPRINGFIELD** *Lincoln Land Coll.*  
Sept. 14 & 21 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

## Child and Family Team Meetings

This instructor-led on-line training is designed to help caregivers understand how a CFTM helps the family and ensures a permanent home for the child; how to prepare for a meeting; what happens between team meetings; and when team meetings are no longer needed in a case. **To register** for this three-hour training, foster parents may call the DCFS Registration Unit in the Office of Training at 877-800-3393. Participants may also register to attend CFTM-C training at computer labs in Springfield and Chicago by calling the same number.

\*Aug. 16 (Wed) 8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.

On-line and Computer Lab  
227 So. 7<sup>th</sup>, Springfield

Aug. 19 (Sat) 8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Aug. 30 (Wed) 6:15 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

\*Sept. 15 (Fri) 12:45 p.m. - 4 p.m.

On-line and Computer Lab  
6201 So. Emerald, Chicago

Sept. 19 (Tue) 6:15 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Sept. 23 (Sat) 8:45 a.m. - 12 p.m.

\*Two classroom trainings have been scheduled for those foster parents who do not have computers or only have dial-up service.

## Central Connections

### Sponsor

Robert Blackwell, DCFS  
Central Regional Administrator

### Regional Reporter

Mary Bullock  
5415 N. University  
Peoria, IL 61614  
Phone: 309-693-5400  
Fax: 309-693-2582  
E-mail: MBullock@idcfs.state.il.us

Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.